ENGLISH ARCHITECTURE IN A COUNTRY VILLAGE

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WITH AN EPILOGUE ON ANCIENT MONUMENTS

By
Arthur H. Plaisted

ENGLISH ARCHITECTURE IN A COUNTRY VILLAGE

By ARTHUR H. PLAISTED.

8¾ in. by 5¾ in. 42 pp. Price 3s. net.

PRESS OPINIONS.

"This interesting little book, accompanied by some charming illustrations, traces briefly the evolution of architecture as illustrated by the Church and other buildings of a Chiltern parish. Brief notes on the various styles of architecture are accompanied by a sketch of Medmenham's history, and references to the buildings or parts of buildings where they are to be seen."—*The Times Literary Supplement.*

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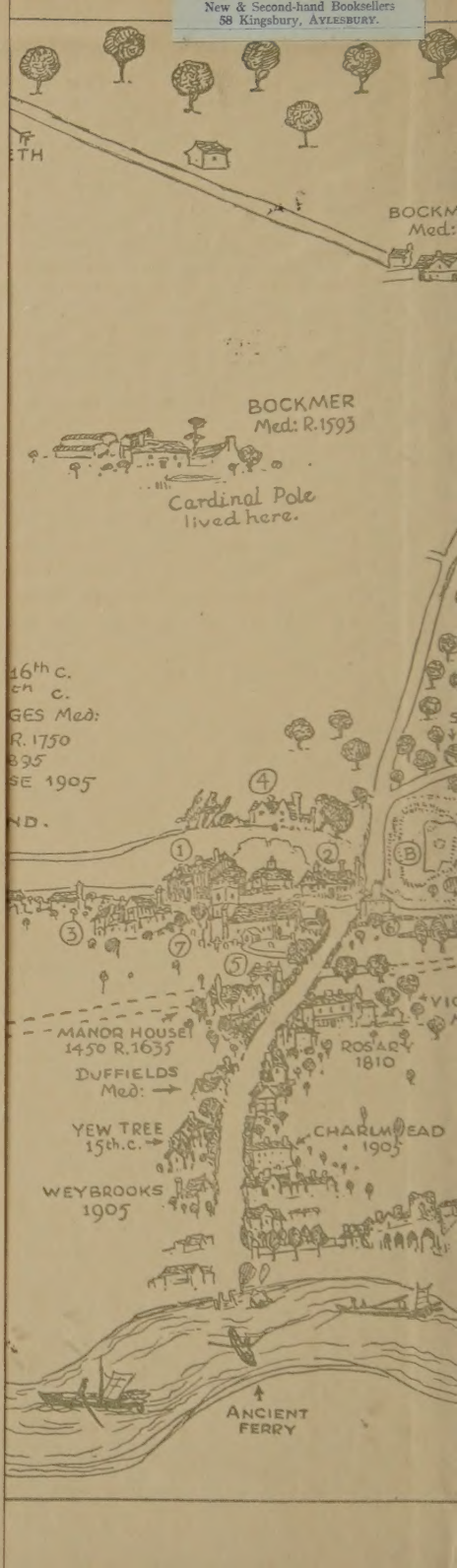

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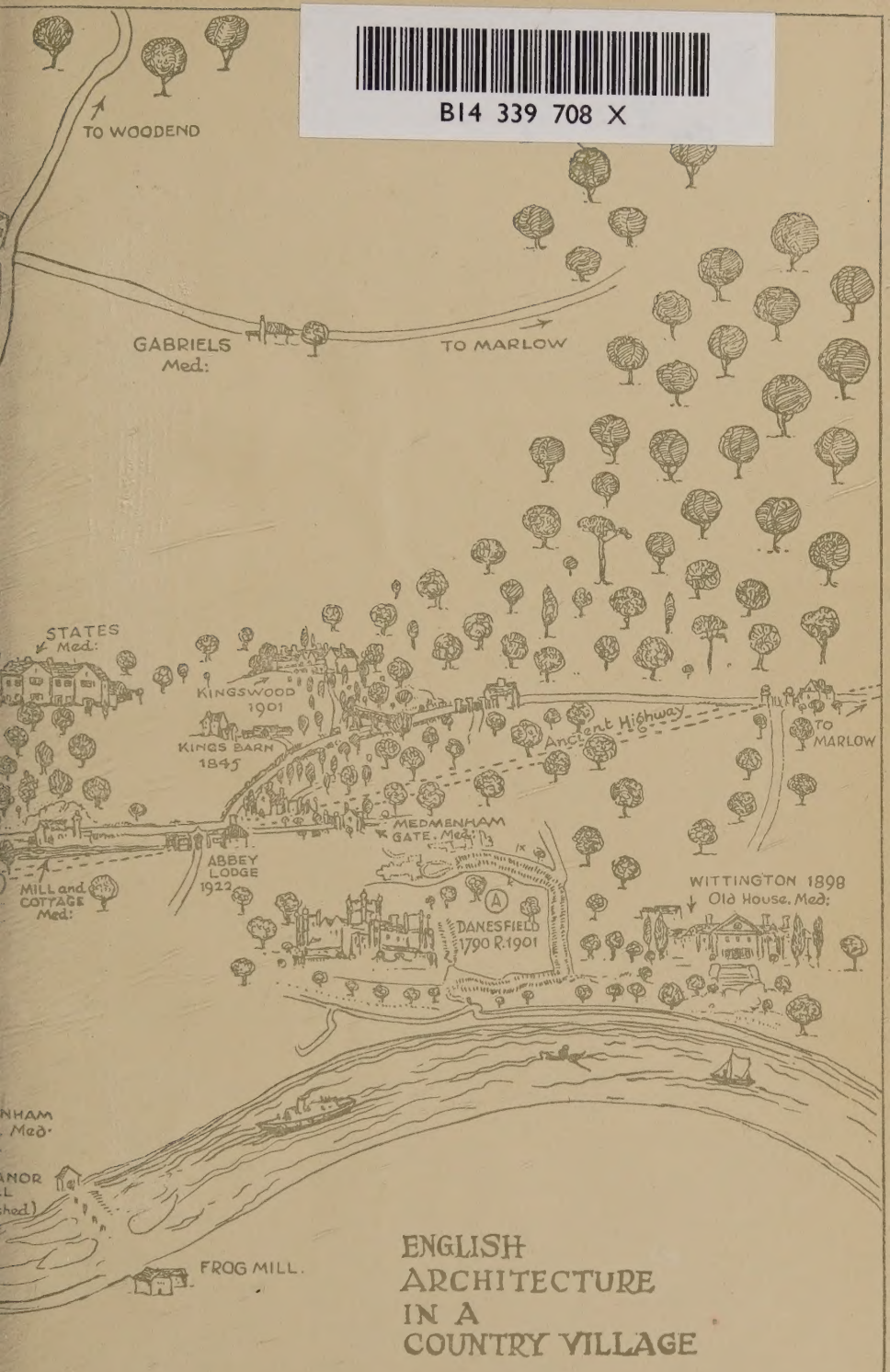

ENGLISH ARCHITECTURE IN A COUNTRY VILLAGE

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ENGLISH ARCHITECTURE IN A COUNTRY VILLAGE

MEDMENHAM CHURCH
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FOUNDED 650 A.D.
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CHANCEL ADDED 1450 A.D.

APPROXIMATE YEARS

MEDMENHAM CHURCH

MANY churches throughout the Chilterns, where there is an entire absence of hard local stone, are of flint rubble mixed with blocks of chalk. One striking feature in this type of masonry is the remarkable way in which old chalk has withstood the ravages of time. The nave walls of Medmenham Church are of twelfth century workmanship, underpinned with modern brickwork, but the Norman windows were replaced in the fifteenth century by larger openings of Late Perpendicular style. The buttresses of the nave are a modern addition. There was probably a Norman tower which shared the fate of many others of that order, and perished because of its insecure foundations. The existing tower and chancel with their diagonal buttresses are of the Early Perpendicular Period. The south window of the chancel, suggestive of the Decorated Period, belongs to the nineteenth century restoration, and the tracery very possibly does not reproduce the original design.

Frontispiece

ENGLISH ARCHITECTURE IN A COUNTRY VILLAGE

By Arthur H. Plaisted

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TO MY MOTHER

INTRODUCTION

THIS little book professes to be nothing more than the simple story of architecture in the back of beyond. I have not scoured far afield for the noblest monuments of succeeding fashions, but taking the examples near at hand I have attempted to show how the most commonplace buildings do illustrate the changing spirit of the age. Countless other villages would lend themselves to the idea more completely. My apology for embarking upon the thin ice of publicity, if such an excuse were required, is to provide occasional visitors to Medmenham with a few elementary observations on English Architecture in a Country Village, and to commemorate those who have been our benefactors. The short notes on dominant features of Gothic architecture will perhaps interest a wider audience, and lead some to a closer examination of ancient monuments in their own neighbourhood.

ARTHUR H. PLAISTED.

MEDMENHAM VICARAGE,
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.
21st February,
1927.

ENGLISH ARCHITECTURE IN A COUNTRY VILLAGE

THE Romans were the real founders of architecture in Britain, as they were throughout Western Europe. Their methods of construction were practically the same in all the provinces of the Empire, and the tooling of Roman stonework is distinct, even when it is incorporated in the structures of later centuries. This common origin is particularly demonstrated in the Early Christian churches of the Empire. When local variations of the standard order are considered in Asia Minor, Greece, Egypt, North Africa, Italy, Spain, and Gaul, the evidence would suggest that the first type of Christian-Basilican Church came to Britain from Greek and not Latin sources. There is therefore every probability that the Christianity of Britain was at first independent of Rome, and was in touch rather with the East.

ROMAN PERIOD. TO 400 A.D.

Features. Walls and arches are of large squared stones, rubble concrete faced with smaller stones, or brickwork; and mortar is compounded with coarsely pulverized tiles. Squared stones are scored with diagonal indentations which sometimes form diamonds, or with deeper semicircular grooves in a sort of pattern. Arches are round. Jambs are mortised into sills and lintels.

The Saxon conquest of Britain did not change the Roman model, so that churches erected subsequent to the evangelisation of the invaders show considerable traces of the pre-existing tradition. There were roughly three divisions of the Saxon period, of which the first (600-800) and last (950-1050) were prolific of Church building. The comparative inactivity of the intervening years corresponded with the inroads of the Danes. The principal influence of the Saxons, who were not themselves architects in stone, was in the wattled hut, the wood block house, and framed timber work, but the last of these was probably not developed until the tenth century. During the first division of the Saxon period a movement began which resulted in the conversion of the old Kingdom of Wessex, including Dorset, Hampshire, Surrey, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

The great apostle of Wessex was Birinus, who in the year 634 landed in Hampshire, where his persuasive energy quickly won converts. At Churn Knob, near Chilton, Berks, Birinus preached before Kynegils, King of Wessex, with such success that the King consented to become a Christian. He was baptised not long afterwards at Dorchester, where the abbey church of SS. Peter and Paul soon arose on the spot that witnessed the conversion of the dynasty which became the Royal House of England. For sixteen years Birinus ministered among the West Saxons, from Dorset to Buck-

inghamshire and from Surrey to the Severn, "calling many people to the Lord by his pious labours, and . . . building and dedicating churches." (*Ven. Bede.*)

No single feature has survived of those missionary journeys, but it is reasonable to think that more than once Birinus passed through Medmenham and there preached the name of Christ. The village was in the direct current of the new movement, for the waterways were the main avenues of travel, and the Saxon settlements were mostly clustered around the principal highways. The dedication of Medmenham Church to SS. Peter and Paul seems to connect it with the first foundation of Birinus at Dorchester, and points to the conclusion that Medmenham Church probably owes its direct origin to the apostolic and persuasive enterprise of Birinus, the first Bishop of Wessex.

ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD 600–1050

Features. Churches are often planned as two oblongs, connected by a small arch, with a few steps descending from nave to chancel. Where wood is abundant buildings are of the block-house type. Stone walls are of rough rubble with ashlar corners. Windows are round or triangular, sometimes divided by a rude baluster. The few towers now remaining have no buttresses. Mouldings are coarsely axed. Gables are sharp-pointed, but no Saxon roofs have survived.

Many Saxon Churches of the earlier type, particularly where building stone was scarce and timber abundant, were of tree trunks or

squared logs, unambitious in design, unpretentious in equipment, and unfitted to weather the storms of centuries. They quickly disappeared as the passion for building spread abroad in the eleventh century. The Norman period was an age of great men and great achievements. It witnessed the birth of a new corporate life in the towns and villages of England, the rise of a new monastic order, and the development of a new zeal for architecture. There was scarcely a parish church which in time had not been reconstructed in the Norman style. The main part of Medmenham Church was erected in the late Norman period, while a great religious revival was sweeping through Europe, and when Hugh de Bolebec II, grandson to a cousin of the Norman duke, was lord of the manor. This Hugh de Bolebec is described as a man of might and wealth (*potens et magnarum rerum*). He founded Woburn Abbey 1145, joined the Second Crusade 1149, rebuilt Medmenham Church, visited Pope Alexander III *c.* 1159, founded Medmenham Abbey *c.* 1160, took the habit of a Cistercian monk there and a few years later died at Medmenham. His body was afterwards removed to Woburn Abbey.

NORMAN PERIOD 1050–1200

Features. The main elements are massive masonry, often imperfectly bonded with the facing; narrow windows, semicircular headed and deeply splayed; broad and flat

buttresses. Towers are square and heavy, and without buttresses. Later Norman walls have finer and more exact mortar joints, but earlier joints are wide and coarse. Piers are low and massive, with capitals of the cushion form. The principal ornament is axed zigzag moulding; later work is more richly decorated. Roofs are wooden, of middle pitch, covered with lead or shingles.

Illustrations. The nave walls, the present south entrance, and a north doorway which probably once opened into a sacristy. This work is underpinned with modern brick, and the south wall is strengthened with modern buttresses. Cavities have been exposed whenever borings have been made, proving that the walls are not solidly bonded. The masonry is of blocks of chalk mixed with flint rubble, all neatly jointed, a fashion prevalent in the Chilterns, where flints are found among the chalk, and there is no hard local stone. Part of the nave originally served as the chancel. There was very probably a Norman tower.

Nave of Church.

One of the few Norman towers still surviving may be seen at Fingest.

In later years the de Bolebec property passed by marriage into the possession of the de Veres, de Warennes and FitzAlans, who farmed out their lands to others, and seldom visited their estates. They left no traces which posterity might associate with their memory, beyond the fact that Isabel de Bolebec II, Countess of Oxford, confirmed to the monks of Medmenham (1241) certain lands and the patronage of the benefice. But elsewhere the new spirit in art sprang into luxuriant life and created a new style in Gothic building. Early English architecture is magnificent in idea, of good proportions, clear in outline, and simple in decoration.

An extension of Medmenham Church and the buildings of Medmenham Abbey arose during this period. Several interesting specimens of the style still survive in this neighbourhood.

EARLY ENGLISH PERIOD 1150–1300

Features. Walls are still massive, but more cut stone is used and less rubble. Buttresses are equal in projection to their width, and are broken by weathered set-offs. Piers consist of clustered columns with moulded base and capital, often cut in pear-shaped sections. The proportions of openings are more slender than in Norman work. Arches are pointed. Windows are of the lancet shape, and are gathered into groups of two or even five under an enclosing arch, and tracery begins to develop. The axed zigzag decoration is succeeded by the chiselled dog-tooth, which is characteristic of the period. Carved foliage is stiff and conventional. Roofs approach the shape of an equilateral triangle. Sculptured figures of large size are often placed in niches with canopies.

Archway to Chantry.

Illustrations. The archway opening into the transept, once a chantry. The piers and curves of the arch are of graceful proportions. The Abbey Church, now demolished, was of this period, and the one surviving pier is typical of the late twelfth century. A plan has been reproduced of the probable extent of Medmenham Abbey.

The new work in transept arch is of Beer stone, to distinguish it from the original chalk.

The original chantry chapel at Medmenham appeared while the Friars, with wonderful zeal and in popular language, were preaching a message which stirred the whole country. There was a growing feeling that prayers were necessary for the welfare of the departed. In that atmosphere the chantry arose, sometimes

THE DEVELOPMENT OF GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE

IN the study of ancient buildings it must be remembered there was never a sharp break between two succeeding styles of architecture. They overlapped in quite a natural way until the new order, which new influences had produced out of the old, ultimately supplanted the old. The Romans were the real founders of architecture in this country, as they were also in France and Germany. Although more building was done after the Norman Conquest, that event did not introduce into England a new style. What we find is that each succeeding period developed more perfectly the traditions first planted by the Romans. This gradual growth may be observed in the evolution of Gothic windows. At first there was the narrow circular-headed light of the Saxon and Norman periods. In early English work two or three single lights with pointed heads were placed together beneath an enclosing arch. The builders next, as the art of glass-making advanced and a demand arose for larger windows, pierced the enclosing arch with patterns, so that in the Decorated period the piercings emerged as geometrical tracery. Then later on the tracery was brought into harmony with the dominant vertical line of the Perpendicular style. In Tudor days the four-centred arch became flat, plain mullions were crossed by horizontal transoms, and windows developed outwards into bays and oriels. Among the following specimens the illustrations of Norman and Early English work are reproduced from Fingest Church.

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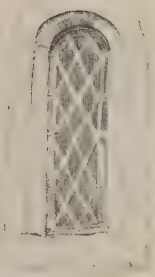
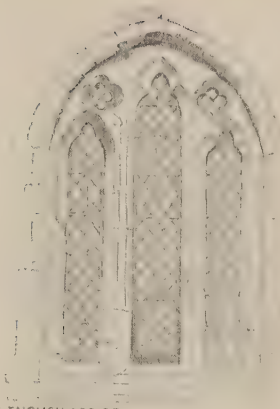
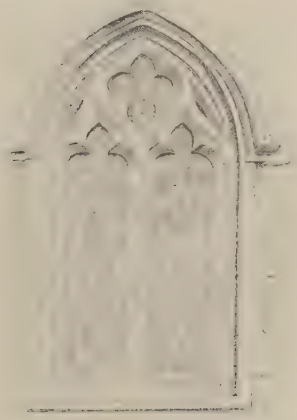


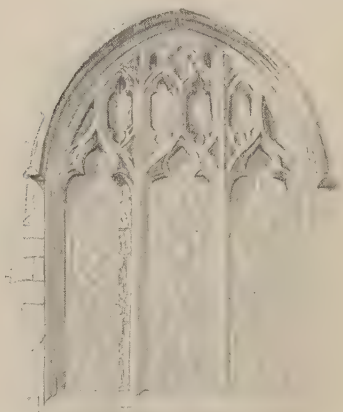
NORMAN PERIOD



ARLY ENGLISH PERIOD

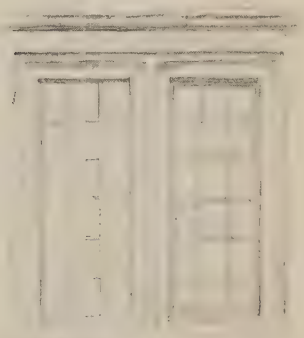


DECORATED PERIOD
MEDMENHAM CHANCEL



EARLY PERPENDICULAR PERIOD
MEDMENHAM EAST WINDOW

LATE PERPENDICULAR PERIOD
MEDMENHAM CHURCH



TUDOR PERIOD
MEDMENHAM ABBEY

endowed for the maintenance of services, but frequently depending for its ministrations upon the charity of posterity. At the altar within this sanctuary masses were said for the founder, his family, and all Christian souls. The chantry of Medmenham was built about 1240, probably as a memorial to William de la Lude, a wealthy burgess of Wycombe, who rented the manor lands from Hugh de Vere, Earl of Oxford, and lived at Wittington. Early in the eighteenth century the chapel was demolished, but recently it has been restored, and now includes an organ chamber. The de la Lude family was associated with Wittington until the appearance of Geoffrey Pole on the horizon.

DECORATED PERIOD 1250–1400

Features. The name is descriptive in that decorative ornament becomes an important element. The clustered pillars of the Early English period are succeeded by piers of more slender proportions, sometimes diamond-shaped on plan, with engaged shafts. Arches are less pointed. Windows are divided by mullions, and the upper parts filled with geometrical tracery. Carved foliage is natural, such as oak and vine leaves, and the well-known tablet flower; hollow mouldings ornamented with the ball flower are characteristic of the style. Shrines and tombs in masonry are elaborate and beautiful. Spires are embellished with crockets, and pinnacles appear.

Illustrations. There is no trace of Decorated Gothic influence in Medmenham Church. Two modern windows in the chancel have tracery suggestive of this style, and an aumbry in the east wall has the ogee curve and crockets of the Decorated period, but these works really belong to the nineteenth century Gothic revival. *Chancel Windows. Aumbry.*

Among the peaceful Welsh invaders who followed Owen Tudor into England was Geoffrey Pole, descendant of the ancient Kings of Wales. He established himself at Wittington, and married Edith, daughter of Sir Oliver St. John and Margaret Beaufort. This Geoffrey Pole (*o.* 1471) rebuilt the tower, the west arch of nave, and added the chancel. The open timber roof and enlarged windows of the nave seem to be later in design, and were probably the benefaction of his son, Sir Richard Pole, who married Lady Margaret Plantagenet, afterwards Countess of Salisbury, and lived at Bockmer. One of their children, Arthur Pole, was buried in the new chancel, but his memorial has perished. Another son, Cardinal Reginald Pole (*o.* 1558), became Archbishop of Canterbury in the reign of Queen Mary.

PERPENDICULAR PERIOD 1350–1550

Features. This was the only variation of the Gothic order peculiar to England, and not found elsewhere. The dominant note is the vertical line in wall surfaces and window tracery. Window arches are flatter and four-centred with external labels, and the rigid lines of mullions continue to the crown of the arch. Window tracery of the later period is lighter and more delicate. Diagonal buttresses are common, although weaker and less symmetrical than the older form, which was at right angles to the wall it supported. Later in the period flying buttresses are developed. The characteristic pier has no capital, it is of four circular shafts with moulded fillets, which are carried around the arch. Open timber roofs are of moderate pitch and hammer construction. The chancel arch, a prominent feature in

earlier days, often disappears altogether in Perpendicular work. Wooden chancel screens are numerous, frequently decorated with panels, niches, statues, and pinnacles, the upper part being divided by mullions, supporting tracery. The special ornaments are the Tudor rose, the cornice flower, the vine and grapes, the portcullis and the fleur-de-lis. Colour decoration is freely employed on roofs, screens, pulpits, and other fittings.

Illustrations. The tower and chancel, with diagonal buttresses; the timber roof; and all existing windows. *Tower and Chancel.* The outer moulding of the tower opening is a hollowed continuous chamfer starting from the base; the inner order is a round roll moulding carried on half-octagonal pilasters, with moulded capitals and bases. The west doorway is continuously moulded and of good proportions. The nave windows were made by cutting larger openings in the old Norman walls. *Nave Windows.* They are finished with external stone labels. The perpendicular mullions of tower, nave, and chancel show the prevailing idea of the period. One north window of the nave was for nearly three centuries blocked up. Another opening in the same wall differs slightly in its details. The east window has more delicate tracery than the west window. In place of the chancel arch is a cambered tie beam, with king post, vertical struts, and curved braces. *Timber Roof.* The panelling to chancel, of recent workmanship, reproduces the vine and grapes decoration. *Oak Panelling.* In the cornice of the reredos are seven examples (*left to right*) of the Tudor rose (2), tablet flower (4), four-leaved flower (5), vine and grapes (6), of English Gothic ornament; also a conventional leaf (1, 3, 7) of the acanthus type.

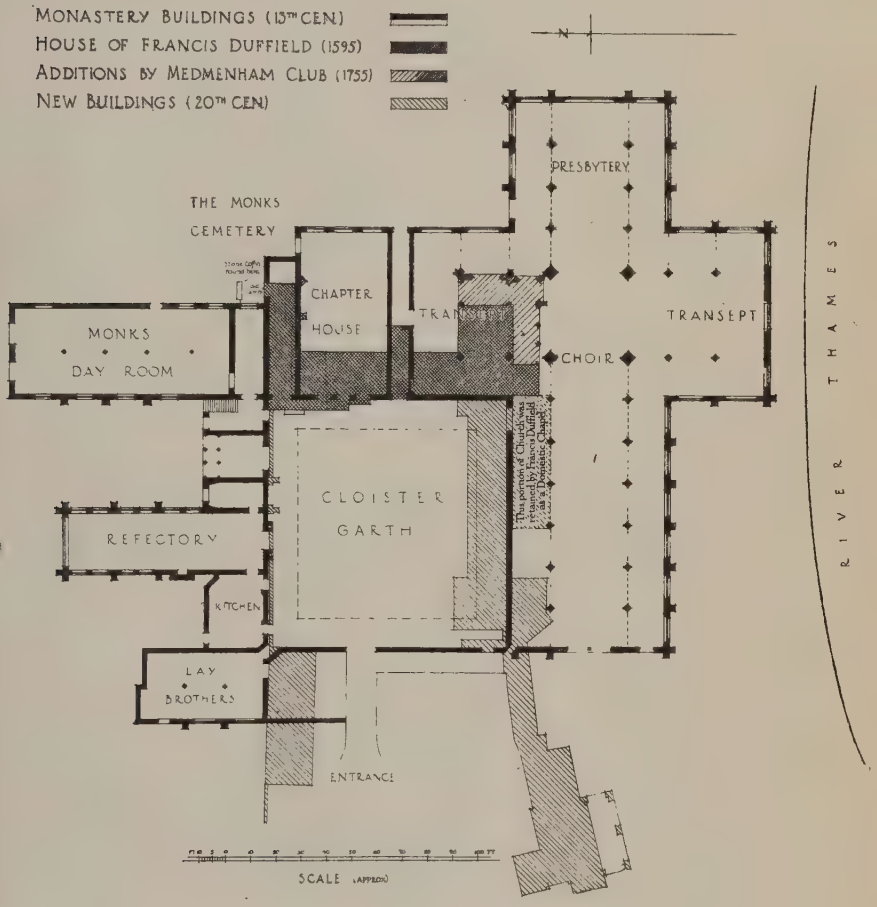
The new external stonework in the eastern windows of nave and in chancel belongs to the 1844 *restorations. The chalk steps* (37) *to the tower, worn hollow with long usage, have been renewed* (1906) *in cement.*

Near the Norman door is an old stoup which at one time held holy water for the worshippers but now forms the niche for an alms box. *Mediæval Features.* A piscina, with a pointed head

and a square bowl, survives beside the lectern. The altar of the Norman church stood near this place, before the present chancel was built. A similar piscina, but of later date and with a circular bowl, will be found in the chancel. Into the piscina was emptied the water used in washing the sacred vessels.

The great church-building era came to an end early in the sixteenth century. After the Wars of the Roses (1455–85), which almost annihilated the ancient nobility of England, a new aristocracy arose. The suppression of the monasteries (1536–40) was followed by a redistribution of national wealth. New knowledge and mental energy were diffused through the grammar schools. These things, combined with political intrigues at home and abroad, brought England to a new religious front, and produced the Puritan Movement. The years of transition were not a time of much activity in ecclesiastical architecture. It was the age of the country mansion and the manor house. For nearly two centuries the descendants of Sir John Borlase (*o.* 1593) held the manor of Medmenham. The lands of Medmenham Abbey and the patronage of the benefice during the same period passed into the possession of James Duffield (*o.* 1585) and his successors. The Church fabric bears no mark whatever of the long association of either family with this parish, but the Communion vessels given by Lady Borlase (1637) are still regularly used.

MEDMENHAM ABBEY · BUCKINGHAMSHIRE



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TUDOR PERIOD 1560–1600

JACOBEAN PERIOD 1600–1620

Features. Buildings are mainly domestic. Houses are often E or H shape on plan, with an entrance in the middle of the letter. Elevations are picturesque, chimney stacks being of cut brick. Bay and oriel windows with mullions and transoms are common, dormers are largely used, tracery is sparing, and four-centred arches over openings become flat. Interiors are elaborated, particularly in plaster ceilings and oak panelling. The characteristic carving is the linen fold and the strap ornament.

Illustrations. Medmenham Abbey was converted (*c.* 1595) into an Elizabethan stone-fronted house from parts of the old monastery. The chimney stacks are of the order then prevailing. Bockmer was rebuilt of brick (*c.* 1593) but much of that house has perished. The interior panelling is of this period. Practically no church was erected in the Elizabethan style. A three-decker pulpit (*c.* 1608) of Jacobean decoration stood in the nave of Medmenham Church.

Medmenham Abbey.

Bockmer.

Three-decker Pulpit.

The Jacobean carving of the three-decker seems to have been incorporated in the nineteenth century pulpit. This panelling still exists at the Vicarage.

The influences which under Elizabeth created a new England also produced a type of architecture classic in idea yet distinctly national. Many currents contributed to this result. The revival of classical learning and the study of art led to a desire to build in the classic style. The disturbances in Europe brought many skilled craftsmen to England. Elizabethan and Jacobean architecture marks the transition stage from Perpendicular design to the Anglo-Classic or Seventeenth Century period. Inigo Jones (1572–1652) and Sir Christopher Wren (1632–1723)

were the apostles of the new age, but the full tide was not felt until after the Commonwealth. In all this development the Puritan movement exercised a restraining spirit. The gallery providing suitable accommodation for listening to long-winded sermons appeared in many churches.

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY 1620–1720

Features. Buildings are of stone or brick. The classic columns and orders are paramount, but details are definitely Anglo-Classic. In the planning of churches a central space for hearing the preacher is considered more important than the "long-drawn aisle" for stately processions. Roofs have domes, cupolas, and turrets. Extensive use is made of internal modelled plaster decoration. Panelling is of distinctive design. Mouldings are enriched with cherubs and elaborated. The tombstones of the period illustrate the characteristic ornaments of the style.

Gallery. Plastered Ceiling. Vicarage. Tombstones.

Illustrations. A gallery was built across the west of the nave (1638) and was afterwards removed (1845). The plastered ceiling (1702) of nave and chancel and the western portion of Vicarage (1720) appeared later in this period. Four tombstones in the churchyard against the east sanctuary wall, although modest in design, are typical of its decorative art.

From the accession of George I living architecture steadily declined. The craftsmanship of the eighteenth century was excellent in its tone and refinement, but there was an entire absence of any masterly or creative genius. Comfort and convenience were sacrificed to symmetry and grandeur. Many cathedrals and parish churches were restored during the period, and the common defect of the age is seen in the

poor success which attended such efforts. This decadence was aggravated by the general condition of the country. Since the days of paganism there has probably been no age more inclined to grossness, immorality, and irreligion ; no time when poverty was more acute ; and no period when life seemed so sordid and degraded. The Hell Fire Club (1755–62) flourished at Medmenham. People everywhere were left almost destitute of moral and religious teaching. These things had their natural effect upon church architecture. Countless changes in country churches during that period were not of the constructive type, and as specimens of ecclesiastical art tombstones frequently predominate.

GEORGIAN PERIOD 1720–1820

Features. Walls are usually thick with facings of stone, brick, or stucco. Windows are reduced in number but are larger in size, sometimes not affected by floor divisions. Columns and mouldings are of the classic orders. Roofs other than domes are of the lowest pitch and are concealed by cornices or balustrades. Mouldings border on plainness, being simpler and more severe than in the Wren period. Wood panelling is superseded by plaster work. Pediment heads are a common feature. Wall tablets and tombs are of decorative design.

Illustrations. Wood End House (1730) has the characteristics of this period. Lodge Farm (*aed.* 1750), overlooking the Church, was considered by Pugin to possess considerable merit. An extension of the Abbey, including a ruined tower and cloister, was built (1755) by Sir Francis Dashwood for Medmenham Club. Mural tablet to Robert Scott (1808) of Danesfield.

Wood End.

Lodge Farm.

Hell Fire Club.

(*Chantry chapel demolished* 1720.)

Towards the close of the eighteenth century nearly the whole of Medmenham changed hands. The lordship of the manor was sold by Admiral Sir John Borlase Warren, G.C.B., to Mr. William Lee Antonie (1781), whose successor, Dr. John Lee, parted with the estate (1831) to Mr. Charles Scott Murray. The Abbey lands, after being for a few years in the possession of Dr. John Morton, were purchased (1787) by Mr. Robert Scott of Danesfield, who bequeathed them to his son-in-law, Mr. Charles Scott Murray. Thus for the first time since Hugh de Bolebec the whole freehold of the parish was vested in one individual.

Throughout the wars with Napoleon England was isolated from all new ideas in art, but early in the nineteenth century two important movements influenced the development of English architecture. One was a current of fresh interest in classical design, known as the Greek revival, which left its mark principally on public buildings. The other, somewhat later and more to be observed in the ecclesiastical sphere, was the Gothic revival. This was fostered very largely by the publication of works on the Architectural Antiquities of Great Britain, which aroused a keen affection for mediæval architecture. While these events were happening the enthusiasm of the Evangelical party was producing a remarkable new wave of personal religion, and the influence of the Oxford Movement was making itself felt in the awakening of a Catholic spirit in the

DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE OF ELIZABETHAN PERIOD (*Medmenham Abbey*)

ELIZABETHAN architecture was an English edition of an Italian idea. The style was more prevalent in country houses erected by wealthy statesmen, landed proprietors, or successful merchants. The smaller type of house is often E shaped, with the hall in the stem of the letter, kitchens and offices at one end, living rooms at the other end, and the entrance in the middle. The hall in most examples is lined with oak panelling, the fireplace therein is richly decorated, and somewhere in the picture appears the owner's coat of arms. Another characteristic of the hall is the oak staircase, with carved newels and balusters, lending an air of spaciousness and dignity to the interior. These elements will be observed at Medmenham Abbey, where the staircase and other original features still remain. At Bockmer the interior panelling, which is Elizabethan, probably stood in the old hall, but it has been re-set in two rooms.

To face p. 18

Church of England. One of the most immediate results was a widespread building and restoration of churches. Augustus Welby Pugin (1812–52) acquired an extraordinary knowledge of mediæval styles and was the pioneer of the Gothic revival. He was engaged by Mr. Charles Robert Scott Murray (*o.* 1882) of Danesfield, for the restoration of Medmenham Church, and afterwards for the erection at Danesfield of a chapel which no longer exists. This chapel was commenced by Pugin before the sad malady came which blighted his genius, and it was finished by his son.

Features. The portico is a prominent feature in the Classic revival, but the style never influenced churches to a wide extent. St. Pancras Church, London, is a notable example. The Gothic architects reproduce mediæval forms, often without due regard to the harmony of the environment. Much of the work consists in Gothic detail applied to a Classic skeleton. The proportions in tracery are not true to the traditional order. In woodwork the cusping ornament is greatly overdone. The real Gothic spirit is lacking, and old features of historical value are sometimes sacrificed to the more modern fashion.

Illustrations.

1830. The gallery was restored with a new front of carved wainscot oak. The older part of the present nave seating was installed. In this work the carved cusping of the ends is typical of the period. *Modern Seating.*

1839. The three-decker pulpit was superseded by another of hexagonal shape and carved oak sides, and the present lectern appeared. *Pulpit. Lectern.*

Window Restored. 1844–5. The tracery was renewed in the eastern windows of the Church. The south wall was strengthened with buttresses. New doorways were cut in the chancel. The *Painted Ceiling.* ceiling of the latter was decorated. A stone reredos was added with an aumbry of ogee head, decorated with pinnacles and crockets, and a stone altar was provided. A carved octagonal font was substituted for the original Norman specimen, which then disappeared.

The stone altar was broken up (1846) *by order of the Archdeacon of Buckingham, after proceedings instigated by Joseph Townsend of Wood End. The nave gallery was removed* 1845. *The stone reredos disappeared* 1906.

A tremendous impetus to architecture was given by the Great Exhibition of 1851. Since then the Classic and Gothic Schools have continued to flourish, but they now work with a spirit more independent of tradition. A new style or manner is being built up which tends to become the free expression of modern civilisation. A developed Gothic order prevails to-day in churches, and there is much to be said in its favour. English mediæval architecture possessed great qualities. It was the utterance of man's noblest aspirations ; it is stamped with the characteristic fervour of a deeply spiritual age ; and many of its buildings compare favourably with any in the world for dignity, grace and beauty.

DEVELOPED GOTHIC SCHOOL 1851-1925

Illustrations.

1876. The seating of nave was continued west of the font.

1906. The chancel floor was raised and re-tiled. Oak choir stalls replaced the older seats. The vestry cupboards were provided.

Benefaction of Robert Hudson, Esq., Danesfield.

1914. The roof of the church was restored and re-tiled.

Benefaction of Rev. S. M. and Miss Winter.

1919. The chancel was lined with oak panelling, and a new oak altar and pulpit were provided. *Architect: William Wallace, Esq., London.*

1921. An oak glazed screen was erected between the tower and nave. The north-west nave window was restored.

1924. The transept was rebuilt with an organ chamber. The panelling to chancel was finished with a new prayer desk.

The additions 1919–24 *were the benefaction of Mr. and Mrs. Hornby Lewis, Danesfield.*

1924. The seat at north-west of nave was completed. The carved end (*Virgin and Child*) was the Sacred Sign of the former Cistercian Abbey.

Benefaction of Arthur Bendir, Esq., Medmenham Abbey.

1925. The oak panelling near font was continued to form a book cupboard, with delicately carved doors. The design of the doors was suggested by a mediæval French cupboard in the Arts Museum in Paris. This fine type of carving was not peculiar to France, although comparatively few examples have survived in England.

In memory of Dorothy Browne (d. 1886), eldest child of Major and Mrs. J. I. Browne, formerly of Wood End House.

Architect: (1924–5) *A. G. R. Mackenzie, Esq., F.R.I.B.A., London.*

On Stained Glass Windows

When considering the architectural merits of old churches it should always be remembered that windows of the Perpendicular period were never meant to be seen, as we so often see them, without their stained glass. The art of stained glass reached its height during the fifteenth century, just when Medmenham Church was completed. From the nave and chancel windows in past generations looked down in rich variety the saints England then adored, lighting up the message of the Gospel, and telling to the unlettered in striking form the story of redemptive love. The glow of pictured glass gradually disappeared. One scrap only remains in the top of the west window. Fragments of painted glass in the nave and chancel survived until last century, when all the windows were newly glazed. The following modern works have since appeared :

1845. *Chancel : East.* Three-light windows : The Saviour (centre), St. Peter (north), St. Paul (south). Executed by Willement.
Presented by Mrs. Charles Scott Murray.

1845. *Chancel : North and South.* Two-light windows : St. Matthew and St. Mark (north), St. Luke and St. John (south). Executed by Willement.
Presented by Mrs. Charles Scott Murray.

1845. *Nave : North.* Continental painted medallions : Presentation in Temple, Stations

of Cross (two), and Ascension; being the remains of six such medallions.
Presented by Mrs. Charles Scott Murray.

1874. *Nave: South.* Feeding of the Five Thousand. To William Henry Caslon. He was one of the principals in a well-known type-founding business. Mr. Caslon used frequently to stay at the Old Ferry Inn. He afterwards rented The Rosary, and there he died.
Presented by Mr. Caslon's workmen.

1917. To Lieut.-Colonel Arthur Murray Pirie, D.S.O. Jerusalem in background; Colonel Pirie in foreground as Crusader.
Presented by Lady Dawson.

On Church Music

Music has been intimately associated with worship from the beginning of history. Almost every new development of Church architecture has been answered by a corresponding movement in the world of music. When Medmenham Church was restored the old organ (1878) was superseded. The present instrument by Norman and Beard, Ltd., has a moderate range and excellent tone. It possesses one manual and the following stops:

Bourdon 16 ft. (pedals); Open Diapason 8 ft.; Pedal Couplers; Melodic Bass.

Swell Organ: Flute 4 ft.; Voix Celeste, 8 ft.; Viol D'Amour, 8 ft.; Lieblich Gedeckt, 8 ft.

The console is hidden behind an organ screen, which is enriched by delicately carved vine and grapes ornament,

having a flying angel at each end. The pierced panels of the screen are finished with a top rail of scroll and acorn decoration.

On Church Bells

The bells of many churches in this neighbourhood belong to the seventeenth century. There are comparatively few of earlier date. This unusual activity in the casting or recasting of bells was due largely to the introduction of change ringing into England. The present bells of Medmenham, cast by Knight of Reading, have the following inscriptions ; the figures in brackets represent in inches their respective diameters :

MEDMENHAM. S. Peter.

1. (*On Crown :*) HENRY DEH NE

(*Ordinary position :*)

WILLIAM BLVNELL (D) C W S K 1691 (28½)

2. THIS BELL WAS MADE I624 (31½)

3. (34½)

†OHN KEENE †EREMY BR†DEN C□W H□K 1666

This passage is quoted from "Bells of Buckinghamshire," an invaluable work by Alfred H. Cocks, Esq., of Skirmett.

There was an old tradition, recalled in Dr. Hearne's *Collections* (1717), that in the Norman Church at Medmenham were four bells, and that one was sold to help pay the ransom of Richard I when taken prisoner on his return from the Holy Land.

On Church Ornaments

An old inventory (1537) gave an account of the furnishings then in existence, but these have all disappeared and are replaced by the following benefactions :

1637. Silver gilt chalice and paten.

1663. Pewter flagon.
Both the benefaction of Lady Borlase, Bockmer.

1845. Brass candlesticks and vases.
Benefaction of Chas. R. Scott Murray, Esq., Danesfield.

1835. Silvered Communion flagon.
By parochial subscriptions.

1903 to 1908. Silk frontals for Communion table.
White : *Benefaction of Mrs. Hudson, Danesfield.*
Green : *Benefaction of Lady Dawson, The Abbey.*
Purple : *Benefaction of Miss White, Lee Cottage.*

1907. Brass Altar-cross in memory of John White (1899) and Gertrude C. L. White (1903).
By their family.

1907. Brass water pitcher for font, oak table and cupboards in vestry.
Benefaction of Mrs. Hudson, Danesfield.

1910. Lamps for lighting nave and chancel.
Benefaction of Mrs. Hudson, Danesfield.

The study of epitaphs is a subject upon which singularly little has been written. Specimens are casually served up in periodicals when the words are of uncommon interest, but it is seldom remarked that epitaphs represent an invaluable source of history. The observer of heraldry may discover in ancient monuments facts where words have perished. The gravestones of churchyards in their rude rhymes betoken the mentality of past generations. The flourishing rhetoric of the Georgian tomb suggests the unmistakable complacency of a self-satisfied age. These features among many others are the interpreters of the silent past. The memorials in Medmenham Church are not so instructive as many elsewhere, but the following explanatory notes may help to promote a living interest in the personality of the dead.

1412. Richard Levyng and (1419) Alice his wife.

Richard was possibly one of the Flemish weavers invited by Edward III to settle in this country, where they rapidly built up a wealthy industry. This connection may have first introduced Richard to Medmenham, because the monks were great wool farmers, and a fulling mill (still to be seen along the Marlow Road) was the most flourishing local enterprise. A

DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE IN QUEEN ANNE STYLE.
Medmenham Vicarage (Parts)

THIS house has passed through many vicissitudes. It belongs to no particular architectural period, but is a conglomeration of several orders. The building has been partly reconstructed more than once. Odd extensions have been added at sundry times and in divers manners. The oldest part of the fabric is of flint rubble, and is probably of mediæval workmanship. More modern additions have been in red brick. All the roofs are tiled. In the more ancient parts the roof timbers are roughly hewn, and appear to be of considerable age. The last extensive reconstruction was in the Queen Anne fashion, while James Harrison held the benefice. This style was transitional between the Seventeenth Century and Georgian Periods. The house was then entered through a square hall on the left hand of the picture. Nearly seventy years ago Frederick Harris made the present entrance by cutting a tunnel through the solid masonry between two chimneys. At the same time he added an east wing with an oriel window. The ground floor front rooms were enlarged in 1905 by a glazed extension. Other minor alterations to the interior have since been made.

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seven-acre plantation at Wood End is to this day identified as Levyng's or Lewin's Grove.

(*Floor Brass in Aisle.*)

1488. JOHN COLYNGERYGE, buried "before y^e^ Rood."

The chancel roof truss was the rood-beam of pre-Reformation days. On this would have been seen figures of the Crucified Saviour, the Virgin Mary, and St. John. These images were removed by a royal injunction and parliamentary statute of Edward VI, on the plea that they were superstitious emblems.

(*Probably the nameless slab near chancel step.*)

1500. ARTHUR POLE.

Son of Sir Richard Pole, K.G., and elder brother of Cardinal Reginald Pole, of Bockmer. His tomb remained in the chancel about three hundred years, then disappeared in the renovations of the nineteenth century.

1677. MRS. ANN DANVERS.

Arms : Gules, a chevron between 3 *mullets or.*

These were the arms of a family of Danvers living at that time in Buckinghamshire, but we have not traced with which branch Ann was connected. She was probably a married daughter of Borlase or Duffield extraction.

(*Hatchment in nave—see p.* 30.)

1728. Francis Duffield of Medmenham Abbey.

This son of an ancient and honourable family was known as " Mad Duffield." He was a stout and handsome man, who delighted in horse racing, and he was credited with many wild feats of gallantry. In the ways of extravagance Francis pursued " the primrose path to the everlasting bonfire," leaving his diminished estates heavily mortgaged.

(*Stone lozenge south of chancel. Just underneath is the Duffield vault, where several of the family were laid to rest.*)

1758. Francis Duffield of Medmenham Abbey.

The eldest natural son of " Mad Duffield." This Francis was a well-favoured youth of massive stature and affable disposition, with large dark blue eyes. He is described as a born soldier, the best of brothers, devoted to horses, an excellent painter, and fortunate in his love affairs. Francis served as an officer in the Horse Guards Blue with George II in the Flanders Campaign. He was a friend of Sir Francis Dashwood, and a member of the " Hell Fire Club " (1755-62).

(*Stone lozenge north of chancel.*)

1808. Robert Scott of Danesfield.

Robert was the son of another Robert Scott (*o.* 1771) who accumulated a fortune in the world of commerce. The son was educated at

Eton. Until the death of the father this family lived at Crailing, co. Roxburgh. In 1787 Robert Scott bought Mrs. Morton's estate, and rebuilt Danesfield. His personal qualities may be estimated in the words of his epitaph :

To a manly understanding
And an amiable disposition
He united
The accomplishments of a Gentleman
And the virtues of a Christian
His piety was serious and unaffected
His liberality
Active, unostentatious, and unbounded
He was respected by the Rich
By the Poor he was blessed
By his friends he was loved and honoured

(*Mural tablet in chancel.*)

1834. EMMA SCOTT, widow of Robert Scott.

Her father was Thomas Assheton Smith, of Tedworth, Hants. Emma was a beautiful woman, and her picture was painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A. For many years she lived a secluded life, and very little is recorded about Mrs. Scott in local history.

Though separated by death
from those many friends
to whom
her worth and amiable qualities
whilst living endeared her
she survives
in their affectionate remembrance.

(*Mural tablet in chancel.*)

1837. Charles Scott Murray of Danesfield, and (1862) Augusta Eliza Scott Murray, of Hambleden, widow of Charles Scott Murray.

Charles Scott Murray, son of Charles Murray and Elizabeth Scott, was born at Madeira, where his father was British Consul. After Charles Murray died (1808) the widow and children lived at Hambleden until the eldest son succeeded to Danesfield, which he occupied less than three years. Augusta Eliza was a daughter of John Nixon, a family claiming descent from the Barons Nixon who in the dim ages ravaged the Scottish border. After dwelling upon the domestic and social virtues of Charles Scott Murray, the memorial speaks of his sudden death :

> Leaving to a wide circle of friends by his own unexpected summons to an eternal world an impressive instance of the solemn truth that in the midst of life we are in death.

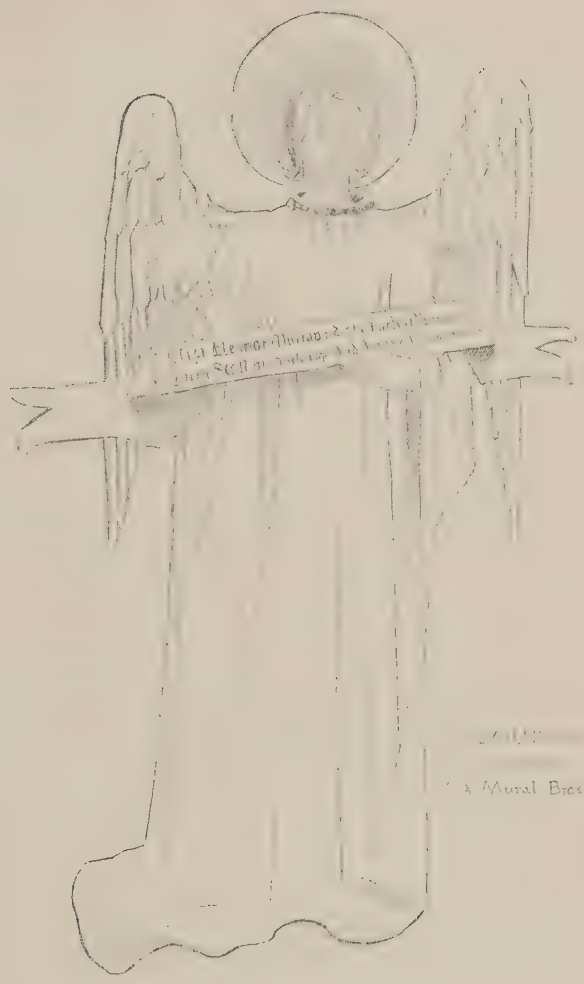
(*Mural tablet in chancel and hatchment in nave.*)

The hatchment was intended to show the rank and condition of a deceased person when living. It was affixed outside the house for a twelvemonth after death occurred, then if permissible it was removed to the church. The ground outside his (right) side of the shield is black to denote the husband is dead, and the ground outside the wife's side (left) is white to denote she was then living. The heraldry of this hatchment savours of pomp and circumstance. The artistic effect of the ancient simple shield is entirely lost. In Tudor and Stuart days quarterings were multiplied and subdivided until simplicity was destroyed, and the shield resembled a patchwork quilt. The

A MEMORIAL TO ELIZA ELEANOR MURRAY

THE younger life of Eliza was spent at Madeira, where her father was British Consul. After the death of Charles Murray, in 1808, at Lisbon, the daughter Eliza came to England. She was a frequent visitor at Hambleden and Medmenham, where her brother, Charles Scott Murray, succeeded to the property of Robert Scott (*o.* 1808) and Emma Scott (*o.* 1834). Eliza, who outlived her brother about four months, died at Berkhamsted in 1837. Both were buried in the family vault under the chancel, not far from this brass tablet, which perpetuates the memory of Eliza.

To face p. 30



(Mural Brass)

same tendency, arising from a desire to illustrate ancient descent by the multiplication of quarterings, broke out afresh in the nineteenth century. (*Resurgam=I shall rise up again.*)

1837. Eliza Eleanor Murray of Berkhampstead, sister of Charles Scott Murray.

(*Mural brass in chancel.*) See illustration.

The vault of the Scott Murray family is on the north side of the chancel, but it has not been used since 1862. *After Charles Robert joined the Roman Communion* (1845) *members of that persuasion were buried in the founder's tomb in the Roman Church at Marlow. Others of the family : Augusta Eliza Anna Murray* (*o.* 1881) *and Catherine Elizabeth Nixon* (*o.* 1891) *rest in Medmenham churchyard.*

1836. William Townsend of Wood End House, and (1839) Anna Lane Townsend, his second daughter.

(*Mural tablet in chancel.*)

1843. Elizabeth Story (1797), Jane Lane (1812), Elizabeth Townsend (1818), Ann Townsend (1819).

(*Floor brasses near chancel step. The originals of the last three were marble lozenges within the sanctuary. These were copied on brass and the fourth added when the floor was renewed. They were fixed in their present position* 1919.)

William Townsend was grandson of Joseph Townsend, a prosperous tailor of the City of London, who purchased an estate at Wood End and built there (1730) a residence in the Georgian

style. The four brasses are to Elizabeth Story (1797) the sister, and Ann (1819), the wife of William Townsend ; also Jane Lane (1812) and Elizabeth (1818), his daughters.

1837. Richard Hunt, Vicar of Medmenham ; with his daughters Emma (1811), Alice (1819), and Frances (1830).

Richard was a great stickler for trifles. He was filled with pomposity ; he everlastingly magnified his office ; yet he possessed considerable personal charm. He spent much time collecting historical data about this neighbourhood, which Thomas Langley used in *The Hundred of Desborough*, but Richard's principal literary work consisted in controversial correspondence with his parishioners on the rising value of tithe.

(*Stone slab opposite south door.*)

1872. Frederick W. Harris, Vicar of Medmenham.

He was educated at Shrewsbury School and was presented to Medmenham by Oxford University, of which he was a graduate. After the Scott Murray family joined the Roman Communion their presentations lapsed to the University. Frederick Harris is the only Vicar of Medmenham whose grave can be identified in the churchyard.

(*Mural brass in chancel.*)

1891. James Ralston of King's Barn.

James was a Scotsman who died on a foreign strand, but was buried in his native country. He was " for forty-two years steward of the Danesfield and Hambleden Estates."

(*Mural brass in nave.*)

1919. Frank Allman, *Alfred Bradfield, Harry Carpenter, Reuben Dean, John Dobson, George Gardiner, James Hobbs, John Charles Hold, Walter Kerley, Henry Osborne, *Albert Oxlade, Henry Potter, Frederick Smith, †Stephen Spiers, and Henry Tills.

All men of Medmenham who laid down their lives in the Great War.

**Died in England and buried at Medmenham. Those not marked were buried in Flanders.* † *Died in the Near East.*

(*Portland stone and alabaster memorial in bricked-up Norman doorway.*)

The memorials in the churchyard vary considerably in their sentiment. Sometimes they burst into Latin, especially R.I.P. (*requiescat in pace*), which a bright school boy once construed, " Rise if possible," but more often they confine themselves to the mother tongue. Gabriel Page (1707), the faithful steward of Sir John Borlase, tells us his exact age : " 75 years and one month and 13 days." Of Owen

Nibbs (1842) it is simply said : " A pleasant child." Joseph Townsend (1862) lies with his wife Jane (1874) beneath a dark granite cross, within a few feet of the altar which gave him so many anxious moments (*p.* 20). Near at hand is the heavy stone tomb, resplendent with the family coat of arms, of another Joseph Townsend, the distinguished founder of Wood End House. James Sawyer (1866) gives wholesome advice to the passer-by : " Reader, prepare to meet thy God." His wife Mary (1873) quotes the words of St. Peter : " Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Mary Ann Wyatt (1873) echoes the appeal of the dying thief on the Cross : " Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." Lucy Jane Martin (1902), parted from her husband in early life, rests " With Christ, which is far better." Only George Meads (1873) breaks forth into verse, and as the grave board is weather-bitten we will extinguish our observations by preserving his perishing epitaph :

A tender Father sleepeth here
Who to his children was most dear
May Jesus Christ his soul sustain
We hope in Heaven to meet again.

MEDMENHAM CHURCH AND ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

THE first sketch gives a simple historical review of successive changes which the interior of the Church has undergone. The picture is taken from the south wall, where the three-decker pulpit formerly stood. It comprises a whole range of constructional or decorative elements : Norman (*main wall*) ; Early English (*archway*) ; Perpendicular (*cambered rood beam*) ; Seventeenth Century (*ceiling*) ; Nineteenth Century (*nave seats, chancel door* and *Scott Murray hatchment*) ; and Developed Gothic School (*choir stalls, transept, organ, pulpit* and *panelling*). The remaining pictures gather up some of the principal features of general interest in the Church and neighbourhood, comprising a few of many examples which might be used to illustrate the development of English Architecture in a Country Village.

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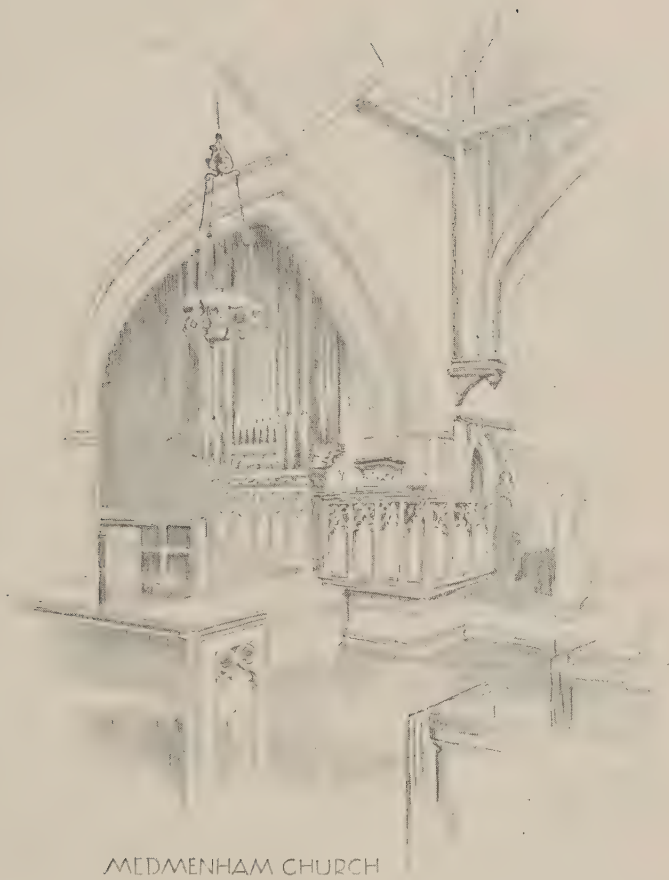


MEDMENHAM CHURCH
NORTH TRANSEPT

NORMAN PERIOD

1050–1200 A.D.

SOUTH DOORWAY
Medmenham

TOWER AT FINGEST
(*This formed the nave of a Norman Church*)

PERPENDICULAR PERIOD

1350–1550 A.D.

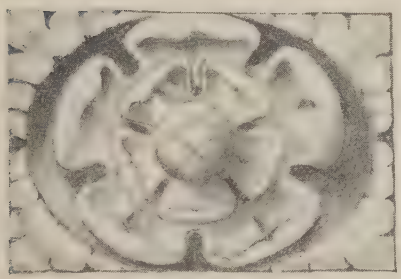
TOWER BUTTRESS
Medmenham

WEST DOORWAY
Medmenham

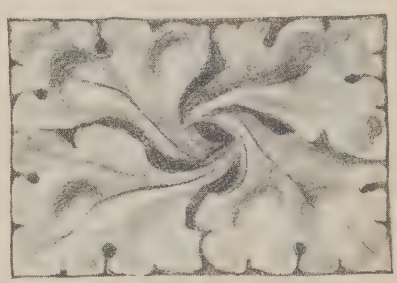
PISCINA IN CHANCEL, 1450 C.
(*circular bowl*)

The illustrations on this page, with one exception of the Piscina, are all modern reproductions in Medmenham Church

AUMBRY IN CHANCEL

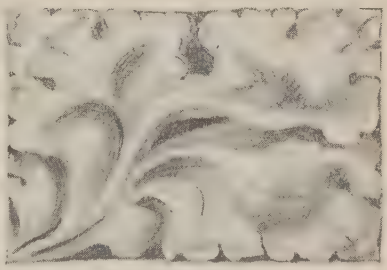


TUDOR ROSE



TABLET FLOWER

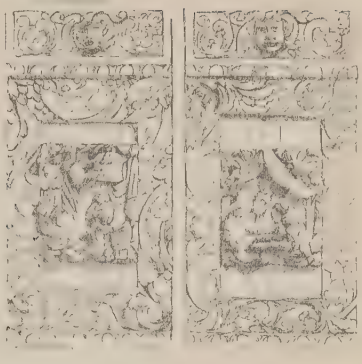
FOUR-LEAVED FLOWER



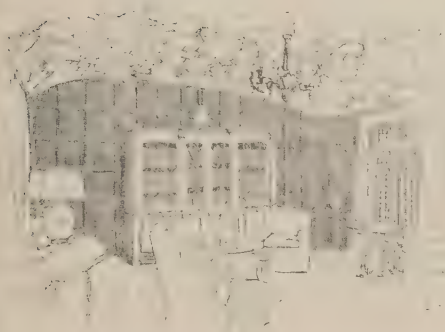
CONVENTIONAL LEAF

VINE AND GRAPES

ELIZABETHAN STAIRCASE
Medmenham Abbey

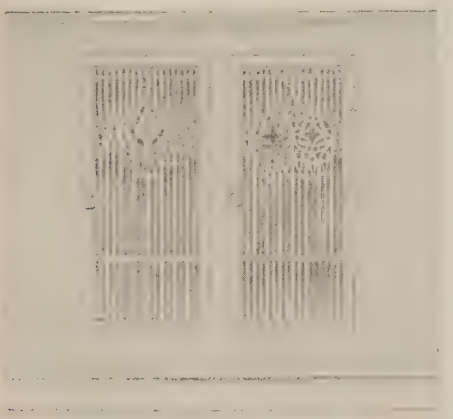


JACOBEAN CARVING
Medmenham Vicarage



MEDMENHAM ABBEY, 1755 (*extension*)

This chamber was the chapter room of the Hell Fire Club, where the pagan Franciscans performed their mysteries. At one end was a statue of Harpocrates, the Egyptian god of silence. At the other stood a figure of the goddess Angerona, a Roman divinity, who, in the attitude of laying her finger on her lips, enjoined men not to divulge secret and sacred things. Nicholas Revett (1720-1804), *architect for these additions, was a prominent member of the Dilettanti Society, and was employed by Sir Francis Dashwood in various architectural works*



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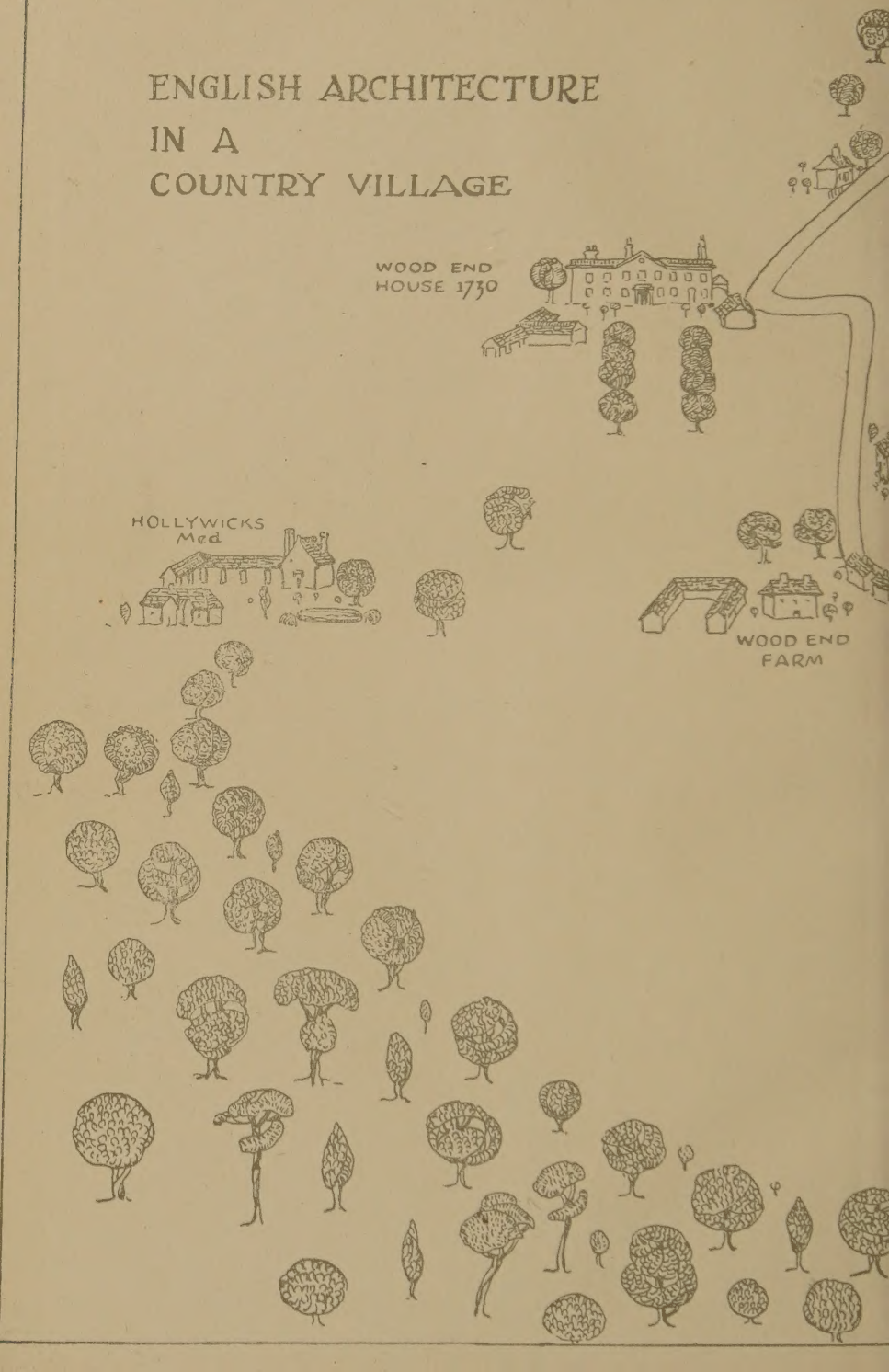

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